DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 294 172 CS 211 140

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TITLE From Santa Fe and Back, or Bust: Developing Exit Level Writing Competencies for Third and Fifth Grades.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 39p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Evaluation; *Curriculum Guides; Elementary Education; English Curriculum; Grade 3; Grade 5; Language Arts; Student Writing Models; *Writing Instruction; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS New Mexico; New Mexico State Department of Education; Writing Tasks

ABSTRACT

In conjunction with the New Mexico State Department of Education's Writing Appraisal Program for high school students, a project was designed whose central goal was to identify and clearly delineate writing competencies for students in the younger grades. A pilot project first collected student writing samples and descriptive data from third and fifth grade students and their teachers in randomly selected classes in two districts (Santa Fe and Alburquerque). Following this, approximately 3,000 writing samples (narrative, descriptive, and persuasive writing) were collected from 13 school districts over a 7- to 12-week period, beginning in the fall of 1982 through mid-January 1983. In addition, descriptive data from 45 elementary language arts teachers from the same 13 school districts were compiled based on responses to curriculum mapping questionnaires, and descriptive and evaluative data were elicited from a statewide appointed 23-member Elementary Writing Competencies Task Force composed of reading, language arts, and English faculty at all levels of instruction. Two documents were developed from the compilation and summarizing of these data. "Essentials of an Effective Writing Program" presents guidelines for the writing teacher, and describes in detail seven segments of an effective writing program: setting the stage; pre-writing; drafting; rewriting and revision; editing and proofreading; evaluation; and publication. "Exit Level Writing Competencies for Third and Fifth Grades" includes behavioral objectives for various areas of writing competency--coherence and unity; sentence structure; mechanics; narrative, descriptive, and persuasive modes; and intention and delivery. (Samples of third and fifth-grade student writings, a writing curriculum mapping form, two pages of footnotes, and five references are appended.) (MM)

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From Santa Fe and Back, or Bust: Developing Exit Level Writing Competencies for Third and Fifth Grades

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From Santa Fe and Back, or Bust: Developing Exit Level Writing Competencies for Third and Fifth Grades[1]

Like their counterparts throughout the country, educators in New Mexico--members of the State Board of Education, professionals at the State Department of Education (SDE), local superintendents, and English language arts teachers at all levels of instruction--have become, since the late 1970s, increasingly concerned with the quality of the written products of all students and with the quality of writing instruction in grades one through twelve. In 1978, a statewide "Writing Appraisal" Program was inaugurated which mandated that students in all local school districts, beginning at the ninth grade level, would have to successfully complete three of the following four writing tasks in order to receive a state-endorsed high school diploma: (1) a job application form; (2) a business letter; (3) a descriptive "theme"; and (4) a compare/contrast essay. During the 1981-82 school year, SDE curriculum specialists and on-site program evaluators had already begun to see significant progress in both the writing abilities of high school students and in the amount and scope of writing-oriented activities introduced, taught, and pursued regularly in grades nine through twelve. The wild beast of a literacy "crisis" in New Mexico had, at least, been roped, if not fully tamed and bridled.

In May of 1982, SDE, carefully following the established time-line and intent of the New Mexico Basic Skills Plan (1977), began formalizing the attachment of the Writing Appraisal tasks to the New Mexico High School Diploma: If students received a rating of "pass" on three of the four writing tasks, and also passed a multiple-choice, basic skills proficiency

examination (an examination developed, largely, in response to statewide pressure from business, school, and university constituencies to upgrade "skills"), they would earn a diploma "endorsed" by SDE signifying, among other things, that they could write--if only in response to the specific tasks and under the special conditions established in the guidelines of the Writing Appraisal portion of the New Mexico High School Proficiency Examination.[2] Indeed, better than 75 percent of the graduating high school seniors that same year were, in this highly circumscribed context, able to demonstrate that they could write.

That was the proverbial good news (see, for example, Scheiber, 1981). The residual bad news, though, was the lingering realization that our emphasis--our concerted efforts, all of the fuss and bother over the improvement of student writing skills--had, simply, begun too late, too close to the end of students' schooling rather than somewhere toward the beginning. This realization surfaced steadily that spring, too.

And so by mid-spring of 1982 we at SDE began designing a project, which would extend over an eighteen-month period, whose central goal would be to identify and clearly delineate writing competencies for third and fifth grade students. (Our early childhood specialists had urged us not to go below the third grade level with the identification of formal writing competencies. Students' growth rates during the primary years, they argued, are simply too erratic either to measure accurately or to hold to any mutually agreed upon standard.) SDE writing researchers, curriculum specialists, and evaluators moved expeditiously: a pilot project involving the collection of actual student writing samples and descriptive (curricular, methodological, planning, and content) data from

teachers--obtained through the use of curriculum "mapping" questionnaires (Glatthorn, 1981)--was implemented, under way, and evaluated before New Mexico school administrators closed their schools' doors and took off for their summer vacations.

Pilot project strategy called for administering three writing tasks--narrative, descriptive, and persuasive--to randomly selected classes in two districts (Santa Fe and Albuquerque) at both third and fifth grade levels. Curriculum mapping questionnaires were distributed to third and fifth grade teachers in each school in each of the two districts. Data from these questionnaires were collected in order to determine (1) what teachers thought about the way(s) they taught writing, (2) what they taught as writing skills development activities or in place of actual writing experiences, (3) how they responded to typical (varied) writing tasks, and (4) how their students generally wrote, how frequently, and in what specific content areas.

The data collected during the pilot project proved reliable, valid, and interesting enough to serve as a solid base for the further refinement of our Elementary Level Writing Competencies Project. Three related components emerged from our evaluation of the pilot project which we believed must be included in a larger (statewide) project design. These were the following: (1) the collection of actual writing samples from third and fifth grade students, in a thirteen-district stratified sample, on three assessment tasks--narrative, descriptive, and persuasive (see Appendix A for specific tasks, directions, and sample student responses);[3] (2) the collection of descriptive data from forty-five elementary language arts teachers representing the same thirteen school districts and based

upon responses to curriculum mapping questionnaires (see Appendix B for a sample curriculum mapping questionnaire); and (3) descriptive and evaluative data elicited by SDE from a statewide, appointed twenty-three-member Elementary Writing Competencies Task Force composed of reading, language arts, and English faculty at all levels of instruction (K-university), elementary school principals, curriculum specialists, "resource" teachers, a head teacher, and a high school counselor.[4]

SDE staff members collected approximately 3,000 writing samples from all thirteen school districts over a seven-to-twelve-week period, beginning in the fall of 1982 through mid-January of 1983. The project coordinator trained SDE staff members in the theory and practice of "focused" holistic scoring (Greenhalgh and Townsend, 1981). That February, SDE staff and several volunteer teachers and curriculum specialists from two school districts rated all 3,000 writing samples reaching mean inter-rater reliability coefficients of .77 and .78 for all three tasks at third and fifth grade levels, respectively.[5] In addition, forty-five curriculum mapping questionnaires containing extensive and detailed descriptive data were collected from third and fifth grade teachers. These data were compiled and analyzed by SDE staff and shared in three intensive days of briefings and discussions with our Elementary Writing Competencies Task Force. Following our spring and summer Task Force sessions, all of our descriptive data were summarized, assembled ("packaged"), and disseminated throughout New Mexico in two discrete but related documents: (1) "Essentials of an Effective Writing Program"; and (2) "Exit Level Writing Competencies for Third and Fifth Grades," a fully annotated list of writing competencies for students at those grade levels. Both of these

documents--our project results--are printed below in their final form.

During the course of an eighteen-month period, we had run a pilot study involving the writing abilities of third and fifth grade students in four elementary schools; we had collected writing samples from some 1,000 students on three direct writing assessment tasks and curriculum mapping data from forty-five teachers; we had, literally, driven around and about the state of New Mexico--from our headquarters in Santa Fe, to Cloudcroft, to Ft. Sumner, to Reserve, to Tatum, and far beyond, trekking over 2,000 miles of local roads and highways--briefing project teachers and supervisors and coordinating the myriad "loose ends" of such a large project; we had met with and conducted rigorous "nuts and bolts" briefing, evaluation, and work sessions with a fully articulated (K-university) group of professional educators representing just about all of the various strands of the language arts content area in the state; we had trained SDE curriculum and evaluation specialists (coming from a wide variety of academic backgrounds) in the technics and practice of holistic rating; we had rated some 3,000 student writing samples and had generated analytical commentary on a large sub-sample of these written products; and we had made it back to Santa Fe with a writing competencies "package" for third and fifth grade students which we believed the entire educational community in the state (all eighty-nine school districts, their personnel, and, for example, university elementary education faculties) could live with and regularly use in the teaching and learning of writing skills--no matter what sort of "back-to-basics," traditional, or process-oriented pedagogical posture had been previously espoused.

E-en the highest level professional bureaucrats housed in the offices of the State Department of Education in Santa Fe were pleased! Me, too.

Notes

[1]I would like to express my gratitude to the New Mexico State Department of Education and everyone there who helped frame, contributed to, and sustained the Elementary Writing Competencies Project. I am particularly grateful to the following persons: Dr. Jeanne Knight, Director of the Elementary/Secondary Education Unit; Judith Kraft, whose staunch support at every stage ensured us of eventual closure; my colleague Kay Landes, who aided me in every facet of the project; Pat Scott, our secretary and research assistant; and Dr. Tom Chastain, formerly of the Evaluation Unit, for expertise he continually lent us in statistical matters.

[2]Specifically, the SDE-endorsed diploma states the following: "The New Mexico State Board of Education wishes to recognize students who have demonstrated a degree of performance in addition to graduation requirements. A 'Gold Seal' on the front of the diploma identifies students who have so demonstrated by passing a statewide examination. To these students, the State Board of Education extends a special congratulations. Information regarding individual student performance and the testing program may be obtained from the school district issuing this diploma" (New Mexico SDE, 1981). Students who do not pass both portions of the statewide proficiency examination do not receive the "Gold Seal" attachment to their diplomas.

[3]The sample contained a broad demographic mixture of schools and school populations. It contained rural and urban schools, schools with populations of non-native speakers of English (e.g., Navajo- and Spanish-speaking children), schools with predominantly "Anglo" populations,

schools with heterogeneous populations, those with wide variation in student reading levels, those with high scores on standardized reading tests, and those with predominantly low scores. The thirteen districts involved in the project were the following: Albuquerque, Aztec, Cloudcroft, Cuba, Des Moines, Ft. Sumner, Jemez Valley, Lordsburg, Mountainair, Reserve, Tatum, Tularosa, and Vaughn. SDE is indebted to the large number of teachers and supervisors in these districts who so willingly contributed to the Elementary Writing Competencies Project. The curriculur data gathered and teachers' individual recommendations proved invaluable to the project leaders and to the ultimate success of the project.

[4]I would like to thank publicly the following members of the Elementary Writing Competencies Task Force for their time, dedication, insights, and contributions to our project: Dr. Rosalinda Barrera, Nema Brewer, Dr. Patrice Caldwell, Dr. Richard Van Dongen, Karen Earlywine, Jean Elder, Mark Feddersen, Jerry Fort, Elizabeth Garcia, Paula Hall, Joan Heinsohn, Brenda Martinez, James McDaniel, James Mealy, Carl Montoya, Alfonso Ortiz, Gloria Small, Dr. Carol Tama, Art Trujillo, Ellen Young, Jeff Young, Ann Ziegler, and Dr. Miles Zintz.

[5]Pearson correlation coefficients of inter-rater reliability for Grade 3 were the following: Task I (narrative) = .84; Task II (descriptive) = .73; and Task III (persuasive) = .75. Correlation coefficients obtained for the Grade 5 portion of the assessment resulted in the following: Task I = .92; Task II = .72; and Task III = .70.

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ESSENTIALS OF AN EFFECTIVE WRITING PROGRAM

I. An early start: Writing skills are learned, used, and honed in the entire K-12 developmental context.

II. Writing tasks, strategies, and skills should be incorporated and addressed throughout the curriculum.

- Tasks should be relevant to students and students should have opportunities to make choices on content and topics.
- Papers from every subject area should reflect the entire writing process . . . from pre-writing, drafting, and revision through editing, proofreading, evaluation, and publication.
- Writing tasks should result in meaningful outcomes.

III. Writing activities must be scheduled frequently and regularly for the individual student and for small groups. Teacher guidance, especially with students' initial writing experiences, is essential.

IV. Writing tasks should be diverse. Examples of such tasks are:

- daily informal writing,
- journal writing (for the "self"),
- "personalized" writing based on experiences,
- friendly letter writing,
- notetaking,
- summarizing, listing directions,
- report writing, and
- writing tasks extending over a few days.

V. Teachers should receive continuing education or inservice education reflecting current knowledge about the teaching of writing.

VI. Teachers and students should have access to and use a wide range of resources to support the writing program. Resources might include these:

- library services,
- media,
- duplicating facilities, and
- supplies.

VII. Administrators should ensure that sufficient time is allocated to the teaching and learning of writing. They MUST:

- assume a supervisory role in the school's writing program;
- be well informed about the school's writing program and about current trends in the teaching of writing; and
- support the writing program and writing at all grade levels and across curricular fields.

The structure of an EFFECTIVE WRITING PROGRAM ensures attention to each of the following segments:

- SETTING THE STAGE,
- PRE-WRITING,
- DRAFTING,
- REWRITING AND REVISION,
- EDITING AND PROOFREADING,
- EVALUATION, and
- PUBLICATION.

1. SETTING THE STAGE

Students must be excited about getting their own thoughts on paper. Specific activities and conditions best support this outcome.

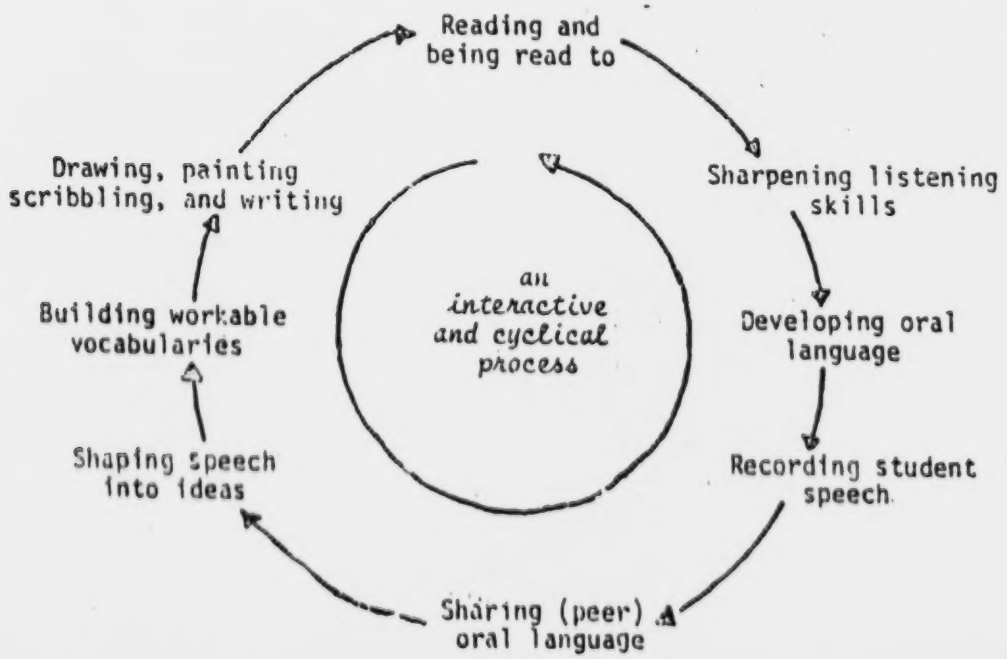
In order to WRITE, students need a learning environment which will promote and provide for the following:

- oral interaction with adults and children;
- collaboration between teacher and child and between peers during oral and written activities;
- risk-taking in, and experimenting with, language;
- hearing the teacher using literate language;
- developing rich and vivid language from discussing personal experiences and literature;
- reading and seeing print in many forms daily; and
- seeing the teacher and others as adults who enjoy writing.

2. PRE-WRITING

Students should feel comfortable with language, both oral and written. In order to gain comfort and facility with language, students should experience the following aspects of the WRITING PROCESS:

(a) WRITING "READINESS"



(b) PRE-WRITING (prior to the individual writing task)

Events

- oral reading,
- a film, videotape, recording,
- discussion,
- class trip,
- painting, drawing,
- silent reading, and
- a story read to the class by the teacher.

Processes

- brainstorming,
- idea sorting,
- defining the audience,
- determining the appropriate form, and
- word association, webbing, or clustering.

3. DRAFTING

When students have experienced the two preceding stages, writing production should evolve naturally. When frequent opportunities are available, elementary level students are able to write

- in various modes, such as:
  - narrative,
  - descriptive, and
  - persuasive.

for a variety of audiences:

- self,
- peers,
- parents,
- teachers, and
- other adults.

° in a variety of forms:

- notes,
- summaries,
- stories,
- poems,
- letters,
- reports,
- journals, and
- scripts (plays, TV).

4. REWRITING plays an equally important part in the writing process. Students should consistently devote time to

   ° revision ("re-vision"),

   ° rethinking,

   ° reorganizing, and

   ° conferences with teachers and peers.

5. In the EDITING stage of the writing process, students' ideas should be presented in final form. Students' work should be

   - edited carefully (by self, peer, or teacher),
   - proofread for errors (spelling mistakes, punctuation lapses), and
   - readied for sharing and publication.

6. EVALUATION of individual student writing should be based upon the following:

   - complete pieces of writing,
   - teacher judgments, initially on content and clarity, and secondarily on conventions such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, and
   - scheduled responses to student-edited papers over a period of time (possibly the entire school year) by teacher, other students, other readers.

7. PUBLICATION can be as simple as sharing with classmates or posting student work on the bulletin board. It can also include a book produced by the class or an individual student's self-selected (and edited) "works" produced over the course of part or all of the year.

EXIT LEVEL WRITING COMPETENCIES

FOR THIRD AND FIFTH GRADES

THIRD GRADE

COHERENCE & UNITY

Students will produce identifiable narrative, descriptive, and persuasive writing.

- Sentence Structure:

  Students will write simple sentences which

  - relate one to another without needless repetition; and
  - begin, build, and close single paragraphs.

FIFTH GRADE

(5th grade competencies build upon those identified at 3rd)

COHERENCE & UNITY

Students will produce logically developed, sequenced, and focused, narrative, descriptive, and persuasive multi-paragraph writing.

- Sentence Structure:

  Students will write

  - compound and complex sentences which relate one to another without repetition; and
  - compound or complex sentences which introduce, exemplify, elaborate, detail, and conclude according to their position or role in a multi-paragraph context.

- Paragraphing:

  Students will demonstrate paragraph sense through

  - indentation,
  - sentences which are interrelated, and are
  - meaningfully sequenced

- Paragraphing:

  Students will demonstrate paragraph sense through

  - written paragraphs containing interrelated sentences which focus on a particular idea(s);
  - writing paragraphs which exhibit common logical divisions, such as introductions, transitions, details, and conclusions; and
  - writing in multi-paragraph form with the paragraphs in meaningful sequence and adequately connected.

- Organization:

  Students will demonstrate a sense of structure in their writing with

  - a beginning, middle, and ending;
  - a building and linking of detail(s); and
  - a reference to the who, what, when, and where of a piece of writing.

- Organization:

  Students will structure their writing with

  - an identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion;
  - an extended development of detail; and
  - an elaboration of the why and how of a piece of writing.

- Closure, Completeness:

  Students will demonstrate a sense of closure and a knowledge that a piece of writing ends through the use of

  - a final sentence or
  - a summation.

- Diction or Word Choice:

  Students will begin to use vivid, expressive, and precise language in their writing

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

(Internal & Surface)

Students will demonstrate proper construction through

- subject/verb agreement;
- use of varied short structures; and
- a mixture of short and long sentences with attached phrases.

- Closure, Completeness:

  Students will demonstrate closure and a knowledge that a piece of writing ends through the use of

  - a summary paragraph or
  - a pulling together of events, reasons, appeals, previous ideas, or thoughts.

- Diction or Word Choice:

  Students will use a greater range of vivid and precise language in their writing.

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

(Internal & Surface)

Students will demonstrate proper construction through

- use of declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative structures; and
- combining two or more simple sentences using and, but, for, or or to form compound and complex sentences.

MECHANICS

Students will demonstrate command of the mechanics of Standard Written English which permits reader comprehension.

- Handwriting:

  Students will write legibly in manuscript or cursive.

- Spelling:

  Students will demonstrate developmentally sound--correct, phonetic, or invented--spelling during drafting stages of the writing process.

- Capitalization:

  Students will correctly capitalize

  - sentence beginnings and
  - proper nouns.

- Punctuation:

  Students will use correct punctuation in these cases:

  - following complete sentences;

MECHANICS

Students will demonstrate command of the mechanics of Standard Written English.

- Handwriting:

  Students will write legibly in cursive.

- Spelling:

  Students will correctly spell commonly used fifth grade words during the editing stage of the writing process.

- Capitalization:

  Students will correctly capitalize

  - common abbreviations and
  - appropriate portions of friendly letters.

- Punctuation:

  Students will use correct punctuation in these cases:

  - commas to set off phrases in a series;

° periods after common abbreviations, such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., St., and Dr.; and
° commas to set off words in a series.

- Surface Word Choice:

Students will use the correct form of the homonym in sentences. Some examples include to, two, too, and there, their, they're.

° commas used to set off dependent clauses from the main clause;
° quotation marks which indicate a direct quotation; and
° apostrophes for possessives and contractions.

- Surface Word Choice:

Students will use
° correct forms of regular and irregular verbs, and
° appropriate verb tense for sentences.

PRESCRIBED MODE

(Method of Development)

- Narrative:

Students will produce narrative writing. For example, stories or autobiographical accounts which
° present materials sequentially;
° may contain essential, although skeletal, information at the draft stage; and
° generally foster reader comprehension.

PRESCRIBED MODE

(Method of Development)

- Narrative:

Students will produce narrative writing. For example, stories or autobiographical accounts which
° embed details within the story;
° help the reader visualize detail and enter the story; and
° consistently promote reader comprehension.

- Descriptive:

  Students will produce descriptive writing which

  - identifies the person, place, or thing described;
  - offers detail in some kind of order;
  - approaches completeness;
  - helps the reader visualize what is described; and
  - generally fosters reader comprehension.

- Persuasive:

  Students will produce persuasive writing which

  - states opinion, request, or opens argument;
  - states reasons and appeals for support; and
  - builds to a concluding sentence or a summing up.

- Descriptive:

  Students will produce descriptive writing which

  - particularizes the person, place, or thing described;
  - presents detail in a logical or expressive order;
  - establishes a sense of immediacy and involvement for the reader; and
  - consistently promotes reader comprehension.

- Persuasive:

  Students will produce persuasive writing which

  - states opinion, request, or opens argument in brief introductory paragraphs;
  - marshals reasons and appeals from beginning to end; and
  - sums up with a concluding paragraph.

INTENTION AND DELIVERY

- Purpose:

  Students will

INTENTION AND DELIVERY

- Purpose:

  Students will regularly write

- write for at least a limited variety of purposes; for example, to tell, to request, to show, to announce, and to thank; and
- comprehend the purpose for each piece of writing they are asked to produce.*

for a wide variety of purposes; for example, to convince, to interpret, to synthesize, to motivate, and to report.

- Audience:

Students will

- produce writing directed toward at least a limited variety of audiences such as self, friends, parents, pen pals, or teacher; and
- regularly address various audiences contingent upon other variables such as purpose, mode, and method of development.

- Audience:

Students will produce writing directed toward a wide variety of audiences such as a newspaper, school principal, government official, relative, business, public organization, community service group, etc.

*NOTE TO THE TEACHER: The purpose for the assigned piece of writing will affect the selection of audience, tone, choice of words and expressions, form, and mode. These categories are interrelated and interdependent.

- Tone:

  Students will recognize differences in tone--for example, serious vs. humorous.

- Tone:

  Students will begin to

  - produce writing reflecting a range of differences in tone; for example, serious, humorous, journalistic, personal, friendly, and formal; and
  - develop a sustained voice or point of view; for example, to write from within when describing an object, or to imbue the object with a sense of self.

- Form:

  Students will produce writing in a variety of forms. Third grade students will produce writing in at least these forms:

  - friendly letters,
  - notes,
  - journals,
  - poems,
  - reports,
  - post cards,
  - stories, and
  - scripts (TV and plays).

- Form:

  Fifth grade students will produce writing in at least these forms:

  - information letter,
  - letters of inquiry,
  - lab demonstration reports,
  - announcements and invitations,
  - book reviews,
  - scripts (TV and plays), and
  - brief content-area essays.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLES OF STUDENT WRITING THIRD AND FIFTH GRADES

Directions for the three tasks assigned to third and fifth grade students follow. The tasks require a narrative passage, a description, and a persuasive letter. Samples of student writing (collected in the fall, 1982) are included below. These are representative of "better" writing in our sample which totaled some 3,000 papers. (These papers do not reflect a full year of writing growth and experiences at either grade level.)

The student writing samples which follow are models of the quality of discourse we believe teachers and children ought to strive to attain (and surpass) at both third and fifth grades. These models, therefore, and the competencies which emerged from numerous other student papers of similar quality, reflect "maximal" (above average) levels to be emulated by student writers at these two grade levels.

TASK I

DIRECTIONS: "Firemen" Exercise

Look at the picture above for a while. Write a story for a friend who did not see this fire.

Think about what happened before this picture was taken. Think about what is happening now. What will happen next?

Write your story on a separate piece of paper.

TASK II

DIRECTIONS: "I'd like to be. . ." Exercise

Sometimes it is fun to imagine what it would be like to be something else.

What would it be like to be. . .

- an airplane?
- a computer?
- a giraffe?
- a visitor from another planet?
- a roadrunner?
- or ANY OTHER THING?

Think about what you would like to be. Write the name of the thing. Then tell what it might be like to be that thing. How would you feel? What would you do?

Do your writing on a separate piece of paper.

TASK III

DIRECTIONS: "Puppy Letter" Exercise

Pretend that your family is going to visit your aunt and uncle. You want to take your puppy, Rex, to their house. You are not sure that your aunt and uncle would allow Rex into their house.

Write your aunt and uncle a letter that will talk them into letting Rex come with you.

Write your letter on a separate piece of paper.

NARRATIVE - THIRD

"Firemen"

Hurry"; the Bank has caught on fire said" a man on the tellaphone! The Santa Fe fire dept. came running. The men are sliding down the poles. They hop in the trucks and they go to the fire. The cheif says get the hoses, And the water spews on the men while they work. There braking out windows and knocking out doors. But the men can handle it, and finally the men put out the fire!

NARRATIVE - FIFTH

The Fire

One morning at 10:00 Alice Green was in her resteraunt making hamburger for tacos. When she finished the hamburger she turned the stove back on to heat up some beans. Except she didn't see a match that was on the burner, the match caught on fire and hit a puddle of grease. The building caught fire. Mrs Green ran to the phone, and called the Fire Dept

The fire trucks were at the resteraunt in a moment. They put the fire out. I was at the scene on the other side of the road. A tall man was there telling one of the firemen what he saw.

after the fire was out, Mrs. Green told her story. She was crying. The firemen said it would be okay. The next day they went in, the place was a mess. It took a long time to clean the resteraunt up, but they did it.

DESCRIPTIVE - THIRD

Kite

I'd like to be a kite and float up in the air. I would like to be a kite so I could be free. I wouldn't hear my mom's voice saying go get some wood. Or my dads voice saying did you feed the horse Jay Todd. It would be good to be a kite All I could be able to hear would be the wind blowing by me. I could blow over trees and mountains. I wouldn't hear my brothers' voices saying pick up your boots pick up your cap. Now I would like to be a kite. Then I wouldn't hear my sister's voice say Jay Todd I'll have you a race to our bedroom. I would like to be a kite.

DESCRIPTIVE - THIRD

Tulip

I'd like to be a tulip. I could bloom in the warm spring sunshine and I could live in Mrs Nash's back yard. I would like to be bright red or light pink. She might even plant some grass around me, too. Some people might draw pictures of me, too. One day Mrs. Nash will take me to a flower show.

Only if I were a tulip.

DESCRIPTIVE - FIFTH

Cheetah

I would like to be a cheetah. I would rome Africa like a king, out-running all the other animals.

In the field I would find my prey. After stalking awhile I would dart out and capture my prey; kill it and eat it like a king would. At night I would screech my terrible and blood chilling scream. On full moons I would hunt an extra meal for me, except I would give them more of a chance. Killing, racing and being the king of Africa would be my life.

Dear Uncle Bob and Aunt Sue,

May my dog Rex come to your house He will not beg for food. He will stay outside. He will do tricks. He will sleep a lot. He will not fight the cat. He will not bark at people. And most of all I Love Rex. So if He is a good dog may I bring him?

Love
Kehli

PERSUASIVE - FIFTH

Dear Aunt Betty and Uncle Keith.

I can't wait till saturday because will be at your house. There is only one thing I would like to ask of you can Rex (my dog) come? He is an outside dog, eats very little, and doesn't chew up things. He sleeps anywhere you tell him to. and he doesn't scratch up furniture jump on beds,

Rex is only a puppy but he acts like a grown dog.

Please let him come with us to your house this saturday.

Love, ..
Jacqueline
Paulus

xoxo

P.S. Please call or write to tell us your decission.

APPENDIX B

WRITING CURRICULUM MAPPING FORM*

Teacher's Name _____ Grade _____

District _____ School _____

TO THE TEACHER: SDE wishes to determine what elementary teachers in this state are teaching in the area of composition. We have listed below the categories we have decided to use in gathering our data. For each category listed, please tell us what writing skills you emphasize in the grade level for which you are responsible. Please list only the major skills you emphasize for all students. The data will be useful to us in making decisions about the optimal placement of writing competencies statewide. [Sufficient space was provided for detailed responses throughout.]

1. Word Choice (richness, vividness)
2. Mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, etc.)
3. Handwriting (legibility of manuscript, cursive)
4. Sentence Structure (variation in length, complexity)
5. Organization (logical sequence, development)
6. Paragraph Development (single or multi-paragraph)
7. Narration (story line, sequence, progression)
8. Description (detail, richness, completeness)
9. Argumentation (fact vs. opinion, compare/contrast, persuasive)
10. Exposition (explaining, informing; organization, closure)
11. Applied Writing (reports, journals, lab reports, ads, notetaking, etc.)
12. Writing in Other School Subjects (science, social studies, art, etc.)

*Adapted from Glatthorn, 1981.

Please answer the following questions:

1) What opportunities do your students have to use oral language in meaningful ways for a variety of purposes? How regularly?
2) Describe a functional oral language activity that you have used in your classroom recently.
3) How often do your students write? In English language arts? In social studies? In science? In other content areas?
4) Describe a practical and successful writing activity that you have used in your classroom recently.
5) List the ways that your classroom environment supports and stimulates writing experiences:
   (bulletin boards with student writing displayed? writing centers? art objects shown? pictures on walls? teacher attitude? teacher writing?)
6) Where do adjustments/changes need to be made in your writing curriculum (delivered or written)?
   You might consider the following:
   - frequency of writing assignments
   - time on task
   - diversity of assignments
   - modes (forms) of writing introduced
   - emphasis (creativity vs. grammar drills)
   - diversity of audiences
   - subject (content) areas
   - preparation for writing
     *need for increased oral communication
     *need for increased reading

- classroom climate/attitude of teacher
- local and state requirements

7) How will your writing curriculum be put into practice--from design to delivery?

8) How might teachers, K-12, best evaluate the writing of their students?

9) How do you evaluate the writing of your students?

10) List the kinds of professional development (inservice) activities you would like to be involved in--in order to increase your skills as a teacher of writing:

11) What would you emphasize in your curriculum at the elementary level so that students can master the "basics" of writing?

HOW DO YOU TEACH WRITING*

1. You teach in a self-contained elementary classroom. How do you plan for writing skills development?

   ___By the week ___Biweekly ___By a unit ___Monthly __Other (explain)

2. What one motivational technique have I used to encourage different writing activities and styles? Field trip? Discussion? Show-and-tell? Other?

3. How often do my students write?

   ___Weekly ___Daily ___Twice Daily ___Throughout the Day ___More (explain)

*Adapted from a New Jersey Department of Education questionnaire.

4. Where and when did I ask my students to write during my last instructional planning period? CHECK those that apply:

___In class when I was teaching ___At a writing center in my class

___In class during an assignment ___No writing required

___For homework ___Other (please explain)

5. For what audiences do my students write? CHECK as many as apply:

___Me ___Adults outside school

___Themselves ___Other teachers in school

___Other students in class ___Other (please explain)

___Parents/Guardians

6. During the last instructional planning period, what writing activities were used? CHECK as many as apply:

___Grammar skills ___Papers (5th) ___Multiple paragraph writing

___Sentence writing ___Student journals (5th) ___None

___Paragraph writing ___Outlining (5th) ___Others (please explain)

7. Modes (forms) of writing in my class. During the past instructional planning period my students wrote in the following modes. CHECK one or more:

___Descriptive writing ___Persuasive writing ___A - Cause/effect

___Narrative writing ___Argumentative writing ___B - Compare/contrast

___Expository writing ___No writing at all ___C - Explaining

___Other modes (explain) ___D - Fact/opinion

___E - Other forms